

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



2005 - 2010 CAMPUS ACTION PLAN

Kentucky's public agenda, *Five Questions – One Mission: Better Lives for Kentucky's People*, guides the work of the entire postsecondary and adult education system over the period 2005 - 2010. It identifies the major opportunities and challenges facing the Commonwealth and presents a set of policy directions for addressing them. Each institution in the system has an action plan for advancing this agenda in keeping with the goals of House Bill 1. This action plan for Western Kentucky University describes the university's purpose and role in the system, promulgates a set of priorities for action that responds to the five questions, and identifies the key indicators for monitoring progress over the planning period.

HOUSE BILL 1 GOAL

Western Kentucky University shall have at least one nationally recognized program of distinction or one nationally recognized applied research program and shall work cooperatively with other postsecondary institutions to assure statewide access to baccalaureate and master's degrees of a quality at or above the national average.



MISSION PARAMETERS

Program Characteristics

- Strong liberal arts and sciences undergraduate core preparing students to live and work in a global society.
- Comprehensive array of baccalaureate, master's, and specialist programs.
- May offer programs beyond the master's degree to meet the requirements for teachers, educational leaders, and other certified personnel.
- May offer collaborative doctoral programs through the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville to meet state needs.
- May provide sub-associate or associate degree programs to meet local community needs in consultation with KCTCS.
- Selected number of nationally recognized graduate programs including its Programs of Distinction in journalism and forensics and applied research and technology, as well as areas of documented regional need.
- Emphasizes distinctive educational experiences geared to the specific needs and interests of students, including service learning, international education, opportunities for discovery-based learning, and other special programs.

Student Characteristics

- Moderately selective to selective admissions with a commitment to recruiting a diverse student body.
- Serves the needs of traditional, nontraditional, and transfer students seeking baccalaureate and advanced degrees.
- Recruits students nationally and internationally to increase intellectual capital and diversity.

Research

- Engages in applied research and scholarly activities that support the primary function of instruction and supplement efforts to improve economic and community development, with an emphasis on cave and karst studies; applied physics; folk studies; Kentucky life, literature, and history; Civil War in the west; materials characterization and combustion; teacher effectiveness; entrepreneurship; rural health development; lifespan development; water quality; and applied engineering.
- Achieves national distinction for applied research through its Program of Distinction in applied research and technology and in targeted areas of opportunity.

Stewardship of Place

- Serves as a provider or coordinator of education services to meet economic and community needs in its designated areas of geographic responsibility.
- Collaborates with entrepreneurs, business leaders, local and state officials, and citizens to identify and respond to regional needs for research, commercialization, and the workforce.
- Works directly with schools and educational agencies to improve teacher quality and student performance in its designated area of geographic responsibility.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Question 1: Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?

To support the preparation of high school graduates and working-age adults for postsecondary education and to strengthen the preparation and development of P-12 and adult educators, Western Kentucky University will:



Enhance programs that promote college-level preparation and student success such as dual-credit programs, “on-track to college” assessment and support programs, advanced placement training for teachers, gifted studies programming aimed at developing and supporting talented students of various ages, and other similarly focused projects developed or delivered through productive partnerships with area schools and school systems, as appropriate.

Provide outreach to P-12 students to promote student interest and achievement in targeted programs in the arts, humanities, science, and technology through such vehicles as learning camps and other special events.

Provide graduate-level programming for P-12 teachers that is available in multiple formats and venues and is relevant and responsive to the professional development needs of teachers and schools.

Provide leadership in helping to align mathematics and literacy between high school and college and training teachers for implementation of programs to achieve this alignment.

Increase production of high-quality teacher candidates in high-need disciplines (e.g., exceptional education, mathematics, sciences, and languages) through traditional and alternate route programs.

Improve student transition into the university through increased awareness of academic programs, admission requirements, and scholarship opportunities (e.g., marketing, counselor networking, and P-12 collaboration).



Question 2: Is Kentucky postsecondary education affordable for its citizens?

To keep college affordable, Western Kentucky University will:

- Increasingly emphasize high-quality academic programming as a strategic priority in ways that deliver maximum value at an affordable cost (i.e., quality-focused, cost sensitive).
- Support consideration of a variety of tuition and fee payment alternatives and accelerated completion strategies (e.g., multi-year tuition plans, optional payment plans, four-year graduation contracts) to increase affordability and relieve financial strain.
- Support increased allocations of scholarships and financial aid for underserved and need-based populations (including but not limited to Pell grant recipients).
- Implement a financial aid communication plan to inform parents and students of postsecondary education costs and financial aid opportunities.
- Enhance strategic planning and assessment processes to ensure efficient utilization of institutional resources.
- Urge systemwide advocacy to encourage the legislative and executive branches of state government to adequately fund postsecondary education to help ensure accessibility and affordability for Kentuckians.
- Seek private contributions in support of subsidizing enhanced educational programming and scholarships for students.

Question 3: Do more Kentuckians have certificates and degrees?

To enroll more students, produce more graduates, keep graduates in Kentucky, attract highly educated adults to the state, and encourage workers to retool and retrain over their lifetimes, Western Kentucky University will:

- Pursue an innovative and aggressive marketing and recruitment plan that increases numbers of academically talented and highly qualified students, both undergraduate and graduate, in-state and out-of-state, and international.
- Increase student access through the Bowling Green Community College, the WKU postsecondary education centers, and the statewide transfer agreement for KCTCS students.
- Increase the number and variety of distance learning programs available to time- and place-bound learners using both campus-based and KYVU options.



Create a campus culture that leads to increased completion rates of an increasingly diverse student body (e.g., through enhanced retention and student engagement strategies and Kentucky Plan initiatives).

Increase undergraduate student retention and graduation rates in line with WKU's strategic plan through focused initiatives and shared accountability for success.

Question 4: Are college graduates prepared for life and work in Kentucky?

To improve the quality of student learning, Western Kentucky University will:

Increase student involvement in service learning, volunteerism, study abroad, problem solving and applied research projects, civic engagement, and other initiatives that enhance student learning; contribute to the development of social responsibility and citizenship; and develop students' breadth, confidence, and competitiveness in the workplace.

Ensure that students will demonstrate their capacity to apply knowledge and training to address relevant concerns in their community or society; respect diversity of peoples, ideas, and cultures; and be aware of their responsibilities as citizens living and working in a global society.

Assess attainment of core general education competencies (e.g., reading, writing, mathematics, problem-solving, and critical thinking) important for success in life and careers.

Strengthen the global dimension of the curriculum and student educational experiences through increasing the international presence of faculty and students, increasing international study opportunities, and expanding interaction among domestic and international students on campus.

Assess student, alumni, and employer satisfaction with programs and graduates as a means of continuous program improvement.

Ensure that students experience a broad range of cutting-edge information technologies that will enable them to thrive in a technologically advanced society.

Utilize the academic program review process to ensure academic program quality throughout the curriculum, including core arts and humanities areas essential to enhancing quality of life.

Build the infrastructure (including library and technological support) necessary to engage faculty and students in activities that support stewardship of place.



Question 5: Are Kentucky's people, communities, and economy benefiting?

To support economic and community development and address the specific needs and challenges of its service area, Western Kentucky University will:

Provide an applied curriculum, service learning, and research agenda (e.g., engineering, biotechnology, materials science and energy, tourism, and public health) that emphasizes the identification and solution of scientific, social, and cultural problems, as well as improving economic development and serving the needs of the community.



Support economic development, community advancement, and workforce needs through increased partnerships with other educational institutions (including P-12 schools), community agencies, government, business, and industry. This includes initiatives such as the regional Innovation and Commercialization Center that support entrepreneurship, assist in the development of successful new economy businesses, and attract highly educated adults to the state.

Increase contract and grant activities that engage WKU faculty and students in research and service activities that contribute to economic development, educational attainment, and quality of life of the community and its citizens.

Expand community outreach opportunities in creative and accessible ways that address the needs of diverse constituencies served by the university.

KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

QUESTION 1

Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?

- Quality of teacher preparation programs

QUESTION 2

Is Kentucky postsecondary education affordable for its citizens?

- Net cost of attendance as a percent of average family income

QUESTION 3

Do more Kentuckians have certificates and degrees?

- Undergraduate enrollment
- Graduate enrollment
- Number of students transferring to the university from KCTCS
- Six-year graduation rate of baccalaureate students
- Number of degrees and other credentials awarded
- Number of degrees and other credentials awarded to racial-ethnic minorities

QUESTION 4

Are college graduates prepared for life and work in Kentucky?

- Level of student engagement in the undergraduate learning experience
- Level of civic participation of students

QUESTION 5

Are Kentucky's people, communities, and economy benefiting?

- Extramural research and development expenditures
- Number of formal agreements for educational, applied research, or support services to business, entrepreneurs, government, and community groups
- Level of faculty/staff community involvement as extensions of their university roles

BENCHMARK INSTITUTIONS

Ball State University (IN)
California State University-Chico
California State University-Fresno
Central Missouri State University
Eastern Illinois University
Eastern Michigan University
Florida Atlantic University-Boca Raton
Indiana State University
Middle Tennessee State University
Montclair State University (NJ)

Northern Arizona University
Oakland University (MI)
Southwest Missouri State University
Stephen F. Austin State University (TX)
Towson State University (MD)
University of Northern Iowa
Western Illinois University
Wichita State University (KS)
Youngstown State University (OH)